PCEngine GAMER

ISSUE 1 • JULY 2010 • FREE

REVIEWED

HUDSON'S Vol 1

THE 功夫

THE KUNG FU

THE ONLY LEGAL WAY TO KICK MONKS IN THE FACE

PLUS

PLATFORM ACTION

ビックリマンワールド

BIKKURI MAN WORLD

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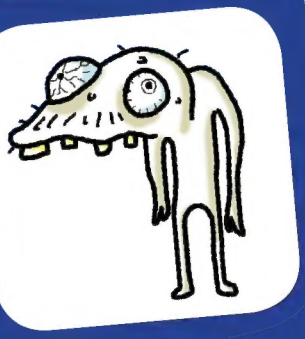

Um, hello.

Welcome to the first issue of *PC Engine Gamer*.

The PC Engine (or if you are American, TurboGrafx-16) is a rather spiffy machine, and deserves a lot more coverage than it gets. Of course, there are some great resources out there, such as <shameless plug> The PC Engine Software Bible, which can be found at www.pcengine.co.uk, but we deserve more.

This magazine may appear at first somewhat odd and peculiar. Much like myself. But hopefully you will find it an original and somewhat entertaining read and I urge you to write in with your feedback to paul@pcengine.co.uk.

Who knows, if enough people like it, there may even be an issue 2.

sunteam_paul

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Every three days a human stomach gets a new lining.

The Kung Fu

Bruce, meet Jackie.

It's a tough life being a kung fu expert. You have to have a big family for starters, so you can keep seeking revenge on those tiresome white-bearded maniacs that insist on killing your brothers, sisters and parents all the time. But that doesn't seem to bother Wang, the hero of Hudson Soft's Vol. 1 PC Engine release. In fact, his rage seems squarely aimed at never-ending armies of monks, suggesting that they tried to give him a copy of The Watchtower one time too many. Wikipedia would have us believe that he is on a mission to destroy the Dark Emperor Lu Hao Yang which is a bit of a mouthful, so I will just call him Dave.

Angry athiests will love this game

So there we are. Just armed with bare fists and pyjama bottoms, Wang sets out to defeat the evil Dave, who stands atop his castle, most likely cackling to himself and killing chickens.

Considering this was a very early title, first impressions usually go along the lines of "Bloody hell, those sprites are big." And big they are. This is often followed by "Controls are a bit rubbish though," and "Is that all there is to it?" But these people are missing the point somewhat, for *The Kung Fu* is a scrolling beat 'em up like no other.

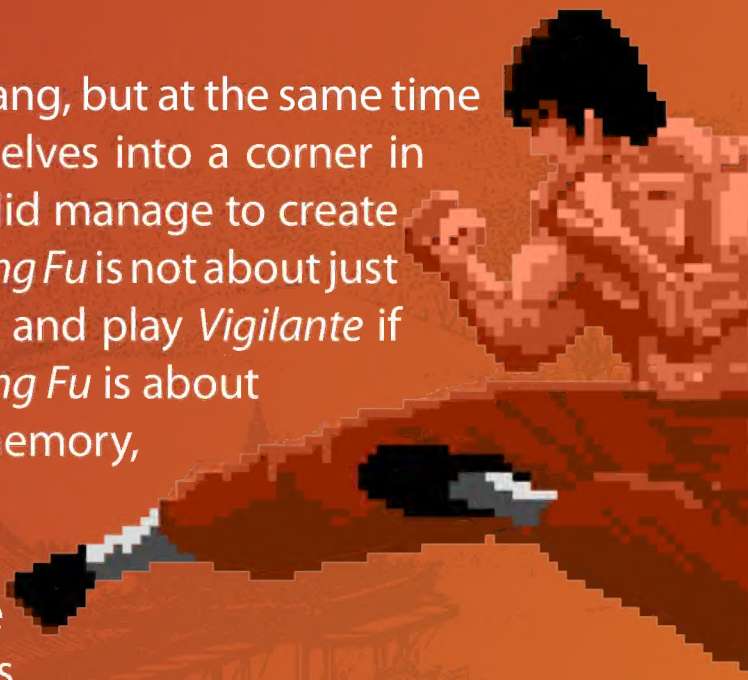
The designers could have easily created a standard 'Kung Fu Master' style game, but no. They had to truly show off the hardware. They wanted people to be

Welcome to Bonus Stage

While your sifu might be pissed you are smashing up all his good china, you do get a healthy dose of bonus points for it.

The Kung Fu ©1987 Hudson Soft.

awed by the enormous Wang, but at the same time they were backing themselves into a corner in terms of gameplay, they did manage to create something unique. *The Kung Fu* is not about just running and fighting - go and play *Vigilante* if you want that. No, *The Kung Fu* is about learning. It's a game of memory, tactics and skill.



Before I get ahead of myself, let me explain how things work. The screen is pretty much on auto-scroll the whole time, except when you crouch, punch, kick, or a boss appears. In fact forget that. The screen isn't on auto-scroll the *whole* time, but it does feel like it.

"Bloody hell, those sprites are big."

There is no going back, only left to right. As you move along each of the four main levels, you are bombarded by the aforementioned hooded monks. It's obvious that some of these monks are pretty cowardly, because they also lob a whole bunch of stuff at you like rocks, nunchucks, arrows, fans and the like. And this is topped off by some insects and bats that, despite minding their own business, will not hesitate to poke you in the eye if you get in their way.

Twigs of Doom are best given a swift kick.

Snaaaake, oh, it's a snaaaake...

Most of these 'sub-objects' come at you in a way that only deft dodging or specific attacks will dispel. Of course, being a martial arts hero, Wang can kick, punch, jump-kick and crouch-punch. Bizarrely, he cannot crouch and kick at the same time, most likely because of a dicky knee. But this all means that you have to learn to react fast to decide whether to use a low, mid or high attack, and therein lies the core of the game.

Too late to cry about it now, bitch.

Those who don't 'get it' are usually those who get repeatedly hit by stones and wildlife on their first few goes. But once you learn the timing and rhythm of the levels, there is far more enjoyment to be had, especially if you pull off all the right moves at all the right times. If you're doing badly it can be quite frustrating, but if you are in the zone, the game becomes a little more than the glorified tech demo it first appears to be.

Classics of Hong Kong Cinema

Utterly mental but hilarious. Zombies have never been this much fun.

Record holder for the most ever takes, the shuttlecock game is breathtaking.

Funny, crazy, sometimes confusing but always imaginative, Zu is the dog's danglers.

But then there's the bosses. They got on my nerves for a good long time. The bosses are less a matter of timing, and more a matter of bloody-minded perseverance until you work out which move you have to spam to defeat them. Some bosses need to be cornered on the right of the screen, others you need to lead to the left to stand a chance. If you're getting it wrong it seems awfully unfair, but thankfully, once you know what to do then stress levels are reduced significantly.

"The Kung Fu... is still a bit crap."

Now this may all sound like I'm really sticking two fingers up to those who have blasted the game all these years and I'm about to kneel down before it as the second coming of gaming. Not quite. *The Kung Fu*, to be brutally honest, is still a bit

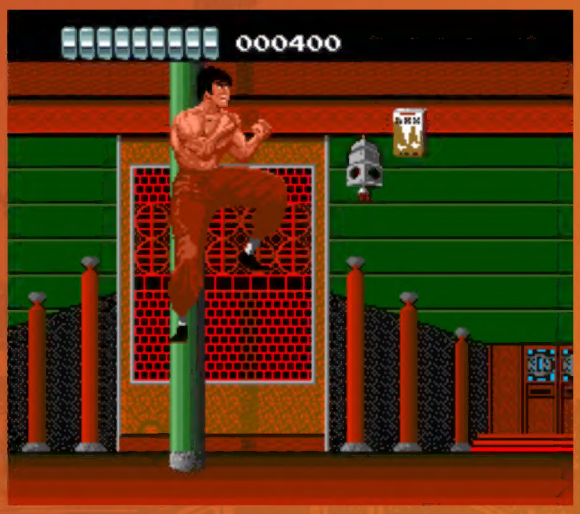
Among the curious graphical choices are bald men in army fatigues (which were all the rage in ancient China) and rather alarming radioactive monks that take a few hits to destroy.

Mr. Vampire, Dragon Lord and Zu Warriors ©1993 Star TV Filmed Entertainment.

crap. But it's crap in a kind of cool way. The graphics were always more impressive for their size rather than their design, although there are *some* nicely drawn sprites here. I very much enjoy the audio. There is only one main theme that repeats on every level, but it's fast and funky and I don't ever seem to tire of it.

Pushing right and punch can induce gigantism in your hand which helps with some bosses.

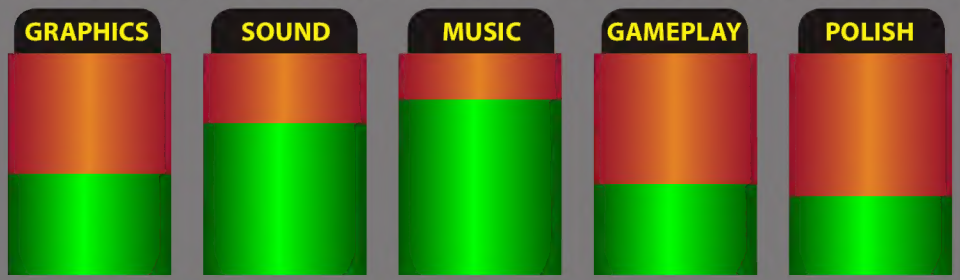
Longevity is slightly questionable. However, this is not supposed to be a sprawling RPG that you spend 10-plus hours on in one sitting. It is a simple, arcadey scrolling beat 'em up designed to be put on for a few minutes at a time every now and again. Sure it lacks depth, but so do *Pac-Mac*, *Space Invaders*, *After Burner II* and many other classic games.



Give that floating book the boot: it's like viagra for your life gauge.

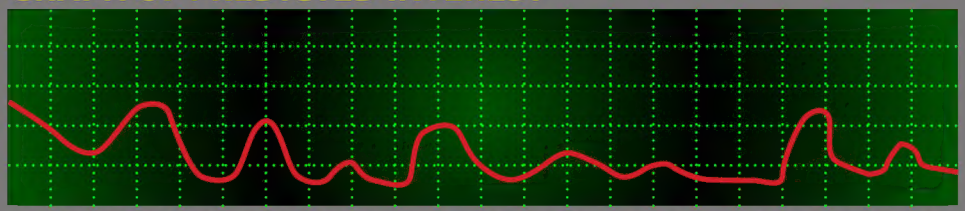
That's not to say *The Kung Fu* is a classic. Well, maybe it is. It's a crap classic and if you can live with that then that's good enough for me. It may have jerky sprites, unresponsive controls and a definite lack of length and variety, but at least it's not *Deep Blue*. **SP**

THE OVERLY COMPLICATED SCORING SYSTEM



STAR QUALITY

GRAPH OF PREDICTED INTEREST



TOTAL SCORE

472

/1000

MAKER: HUDSON SOFT • YEAR: 1987 • FORMAT: HUCARD

Star Trek: The Next Generation ©2002 Paramount Pictures.

LASER SOFT

新感覚RPG「BABEL(バベル)」スーパーCDで好評発売中!!

突如生じた時空間の歪み〈時震〉は、ひとつの架空世界を生みだした。

未開拓と機械文明が入り交じり、争いの絶えない混乱の世界……。
人はそこを「BABEL(バベル)」と呼んだ……。

BABEL

※BABEL プレイ上の注意…
第5章でミラルヴァとの戦闘時にゼルが戦闘不能のままアリサがミラルヴァを倒してしまった場合、すみやかにリセットの後、再ロードして下さい。そのまま続けますとゲーム進行に異常をきたす場合があります。
お客様には大変ご迷惑をお掛けしますが宜しくお願い致します。

マコとアコのさよならは言わないよん!

マコ：こんにちは。マコです。今回は残念なお知らせがあります。
アコ：雑誌広告の花だった（?）このコーナーも今回で最終回となってしまうのです。
マコ：まっ、でもこれでもう会えない訳ではないので、たまに出てくることもあるでしょう。
アコ：そのときは、よろしくネ！
マコ：それでは、元気よくニューソフト開発の発表といきましょう！
アコ：まずは、みんなお待ちかねの「コズミックファンタジー3」の開発が始まりました。まだまだ企画の段階ですが、多分秋頃にはみんなのお家

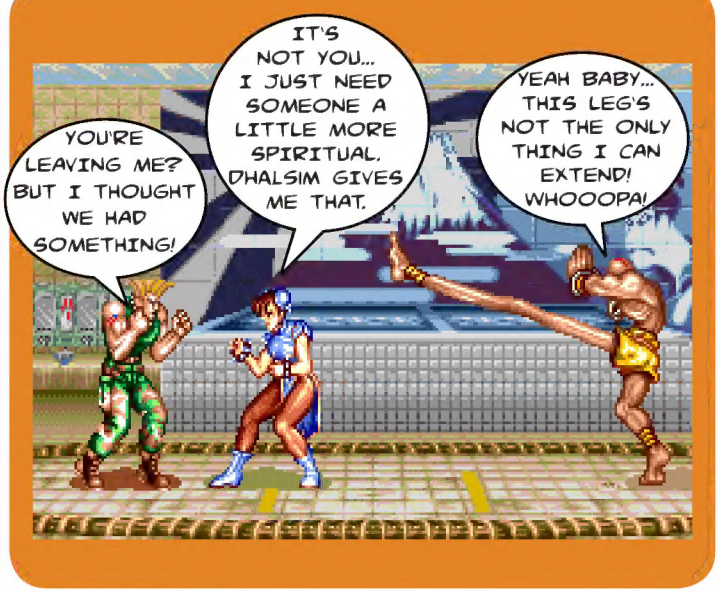
Babel ©Laser Soft/Telenet

RANDOMONIUM

The Terrifying Story of the Altered Beast

The Adventures of Kato & Ken

#47


YOU'RE LEAVING ME? BUT I THOUGHT WE HAD SOMETHING!
IT'S NOT YOU... I JUST NEED SOMEONE A LITTLE MORE SPIRITUAL. DHALSIM GIVES ME THAT.
YEAH BABY... THIS LEG'S NOT THE ONLY THING I CAN EXTEND! WHOOOPA!

Altered Beast ©1988/1989 Sega/NEC Avenue. Kato Chan & Ken Chan ©1987 Hudson Soft. Operation Wolf ©1990 Taito/NEC Avenue. Street Fighter II' ©1991, 1992, 1993 Capcom, NEC Home Electronics Ltd. Abbey Road cover ©Apple (Parlophone)/EMI, or Iain Macmillan

Bikkuri Man World

Some people can get away with anything. For example, Bikkuri Man can quite happily set off for a walk wearing nothing but a nappy, but when I tried it, I was told it was not 'appropriate.' I'm never going back to that girl's school again.

A claw in the nads is enough to make anyone jump.

So there is ~~Wonder Boy~~ Bikkuri Man taking his constitutional, when he decides to pop into the nearest hollow tree trunk for a quick Jimmy Riddle. Out jumps a suspiciously bearded gent (and let's face it, beards are inherently suspicious - just what are they trying to hide?) calling himself Super Zeus, lobs a sword at him and demands he save the land from the evil Jura.

As if to defy Mario, Bikkuri Man prefers to slaughter the mushroom-folk instead of befriending them.

At this point, most people would call the police, but ~~Wonder Boy~~ Bikkuri man obviously has nothing better to do with his evening and so decides to go along with it. And quite an adventure it turns out to be.

Not one for conservation, he traverses oceans, deserts, lava filled caves and tropical islands while casually dispatching any of the local fauna that dares to cross his path. But he is not alone in his quest, for the citizens of ~~Monster Land~~ Bikkuri Man World

Bikkuri Man World ©1987 Hudson Soft, LAD-NAS

Much like being on the game, knowing the right place to stand can reap great financial rewards.

have set up shops in exotic locations, ready to sell him all manner of goods. You have to admire them - the world could be coming to an end but they still try to make a profit off of the very person that would save them.

Ignore these shops at your peril, as they are not just pointless fluff. Shoes give you a faster running speed and allow you to jump to places that are otherwise inaccessible, shields allow you to deflect arrows and suchlike, and there is a selection of special weapons that are great to use in times of panic. And if you feel a little worse for wear, the local nurse is more than happy to get your blood pumping again (insert Sid James style cackle here).

"...this game loves secret spots..."

Unfortunately ~~Wonder Boy~~ Bikkuri Man seems to have left his wallet on the kitchen table, so it is up to you to collect money as you go. Some of this is left behind by the various angry critters (probably justified considering you are trying to stick a sword in their face) while a lot of cash is carefully hidden and can only be uncovered by standing or jumping in exactly the right spot. These spots are important to discover as otherwise it can take some time to get yourself properly kitted out. In fact, this game loves secret spots, with hidden doors being the basis of an important side-quest that require exchanging items as you progress.

All the Wonder Boy bosses have been redrawn, although their attacks remain the same.

"I have this terrible feeling of déjà vu."

If you're wondering why this all looks familiar it is, of course, because this is a conversion of Wonder Boy in Monster Land. Due to Sega's ownership of the character, Hudson Soft decided to licence the popular anime/food-product Bikkuri Man. It has to be said that as conversions go, this is pretty much pixel perfect and certainly sonically identical to the arcade game. There have been a few minor alterations in map layout and occasional graphical differences, and it's hardly a technical tour-de-force to begin with, but fans won't find much to complain about here.

Bosses are an important element in platform games, and the designers have chosen to bless us with boss battles all over the place. Before the end of each stage, you usually get to fight a boss to obtain the key to progress, but there are also other boss rooms during the levels that are optional, but offer rewards such as more powerful swords. Tempting to try, but always a risk. Luckily for you, a quick swig of a blue potion (should you have it) will bring you back to life should you fall.

That flimsy nappy provides little protection from a spike up the arse.

This all sounds like jolly good fun so far, so what's the catch? There isn't really one. It's actually a solid little platform adventure which is enjoyable to play and rewards you with progression the more familiar you are with the levels. Most mistakes tend to be your own fault, although a couple of the bosses can be a tad frustrating if you are not on top form. It doesn't look a million miles away from its Master System cousin, but to be fair it is the first release on the PC Engine.

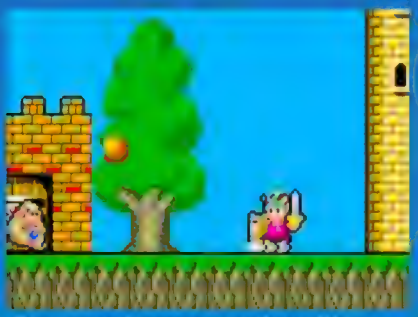
Give this girl a few coins and you'll leave her establishment with balls of fire.

Audio is surprisingly good - if not technically inspiring it still has a nice

This little bugger jumps around all over the place, so you have to be quick.

sound to it, a sound that replicates the arcade original perfectly, and this is only helped by a selection of great tunes that accompany the action. ~~Wonder Boy in Monster Land~~ Bikkuri Man World is somewhat reminicent of Son Son II, although the gameplay is a tad more sedate. But I like it that way, I'm old and don't feel like rushing around as much any more.

There is only one minor problem with the game and that is in a later level when you are asked questions to progress. The Japanese makes it somewhat challenging if you can't read it. But don't worry, you're probably rubbish and won't get that far. Besides, there is a translation patch floating around out there somewhere in internetland, if you know where to look. Just don't tell anyone I told you. **SP**



Everyone knows monkeys like to fling things. Which is why purchasing a shield is a must.

Cool Stuff dropped by baddies

Wheeee! Flying boots make your jumps last longer.

The gauntlet doubles your attack strength for a while.

A shiny helmet doubles your defense temporarily.

Small hearts give life, big hearts fully restore it.

Balls of fire that home in on the nearest enemy.

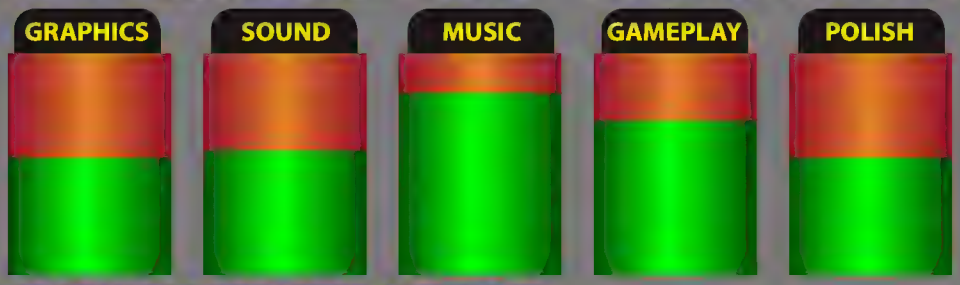
A small tornado whips along the ground at your foes.

Bouncing bombs explode upon contact with an enemy.

A flash of lightning will damage all enemies on screen.

This magical cloak provides invincibility for a time.

THE OVERLY COMPLICATED SCORING SYSTEM



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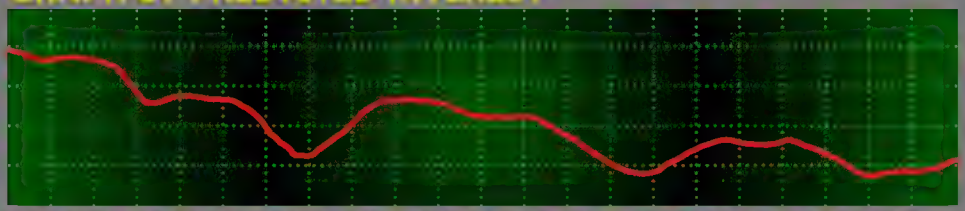


TOTAL SCORE

785

/1000

MAKER: HUDSON SOFT • YEAR: 1987 • FORMAT: HUCARD

Star Trek: The Next Generation ©2002 Paramount Pictures.

Gaming Tongue

The world of gaming is not confined to the PC Engine, so we give you a taste of whatever else is out there.

Wardner • Taito • 1987 • Arcade

With a feel to it that is not dissimilar to *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* or its more popular sequel, *Wardner* is an often challenging platformer. Where it benefits from very reasonable restart points, it also has a few cheap deaths in it, but for the most part it is an enjoyable game that will put to the test all your platforming instincts. It looks nice enough and has a memorable soundtrack as well, making it worth dropping a few coins into. But if you plan to complete it, you'd better get a lot of practice, or have a very deep pocket.

Wonder Boy • Sega • 1987 • Sega Master System

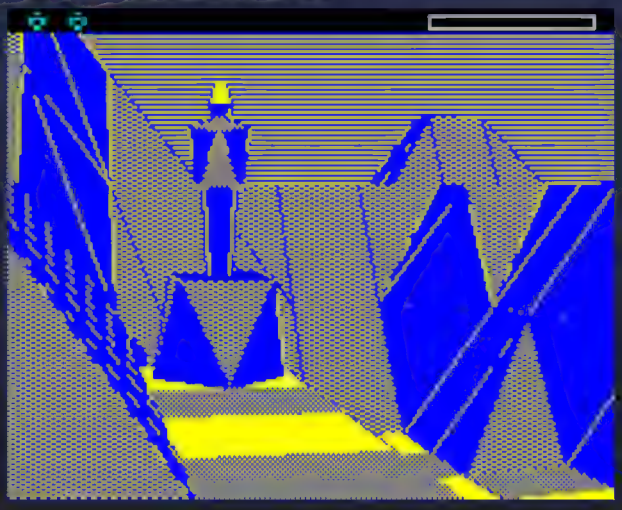
If you looked up 'platform game' in a dictionary, there really should be a screenshot of *Wonder Boy*. It is platforming at its purest - with fast gameplay requiring good reflexes, and superb level design that allows the game to flow without too many stops and starts. As conversions go, the Master System does a bang up job here, even improving on some of the arcade graphics in places. By all rights it should be repetitive, but I can never tire of *Wonder Boy*. It's the best in the series and, despite a bit of sprite flicker here and there, one of the finest platform games of all time.

Wardner ©1987 Taito, Wonder Boy ©1987 Sega, Westone

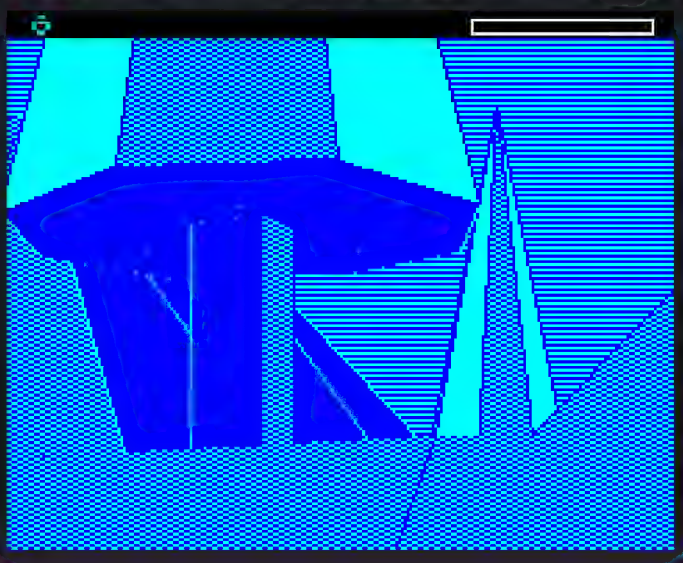
Attack Animal Gakuen • Pony Canyon • 1987 • Famicom

An utterly shameless *Space Harrier* clone, this game fall far short of that which it imitates. Replacing the Harrier with a girl in school uniform, the gameplay remains pretty much the same. Unfortunately, the game is overly difficult and suffers from the limitations of being able to fire only two or three shots at once, which often leaves you bashing the fire button to find nothing happening. Graphics are quite smooth but flickery and the music is jolly but gets annoying rather quickly. Even the 3D mode can't save this one.

The Sentinel • Firebird • 1987 • ZX Spectrum



A truly original and compelling experience, *The Sentinel* is a puzzle game like no other. On an eerie landscape, the Sentinel rotates atop his tower. He sees you. he sucks your life. You are no more. The only way to win is to absorb him before he absorbs you. Around the landscape are trees that you can suck in for energy - but you can only absorb something if you can see the floor tile it is standing on. Height is critical in *The Sentinel* - create a block, create a robot, then teleport into it to move around, each time striving to get higher and higher until you can finally absorb the Sentinel himself. With impressive, atmospheric 3D graphics and thousands of different landscapes, you will be sucked in to this game for a long, long time. **SP**



Attack Animal Gakuen ©1987 Pony Canyon, The Sentinel ©1987 Firebird

Fish & Tips

Hints and cheats to help you stay ahead of the pack

The Kung Fu: Boss Battles

The stumbling block for beginners in The Kung Fu are the bosses which can be initially frustrating when you aren't pulling the right moves. Here is a simple guide to all of them.

Corner him on the right and keep kicking.

Stay at the far left and kick until he drops.

As before, go in for the attack with constant kicks.

Force her right and pummel her with punches.

Crouch-punch in the centre or centre right works best.

Let her advance a little, then keep punching her back.

The super punch works best here (RIGHT+PUNCH).

Keep him busy with a flurry of punches to the head.

Super punch again to drop him quickly.

Zombie Wang is best super punched to death.

More super punching...it's getting predictable.

Super punch the final boss, and kick to keep him back.

The Kung Fu ©1987 Hudson Soft.

THE PC Engine SOFTWARE BIBLE

WWW.PCENGINE.CO.UK

GO TAKE A LOOK OR I WILL DROWN THIS BABY HEDGEHOG

The Final Countdown

A definitive top 10 of PC Engine game features

Top 10 Player Deaths

10. Bomber Man

Such a cute little fella, it always gives great pleasure to watch him pop in Mr Creosote-esque fashion.

Going...

Going...

Gone.

9. Schbibin Man

Not only do you get to spin around and fall on the floor with perfect comic timing, you also get a huge message on screen saying you died. You know, in case you didn't notice.

8. Prince of Persia

Not the most extravagant death, but there's something about the harsh clang-thud as you fall onto spikes from a great height that really makes this memorable.

Wheeeeee!

SPLOT!

7. Red Alert

Gore is always fun. The fact that Guy Kazama decides to perform a pirouette before his guts explode all over himself just adds to the artistic nature of this death.

6. Obbochama-kun

This game makes the list purely because the various deaths are completely bonkers Japanese style. Turning into a nude bird anyone?

W

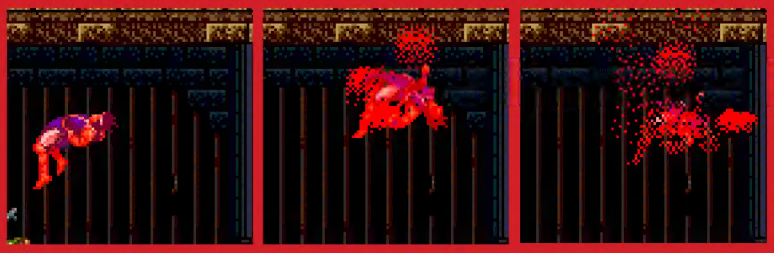
T

F

Bomber Man ©1990 Hudson Soft., Schbibin Man ©1989 NCS/Masaya, Prince of Persia ©1991 Riverhill Soft ©1989 Jordan Mechner/Broderbund Software inc, Red Alert ©1989 Laser Soft/Telenet, Obbochama-kun ©1991 Pack-in-Video/Namco/ Kobayashi Yoshinori/

5. Dracula X

Obviously a bit of a drama queen, Richter flies back with a loud howl of anguish as his body disintegrates in a shower of blood. That's the way I want to go.



4. Fausseté Amour

No guesses as to why this is in the list. Who doesn't want to see a cute gal's clothes fly off as she collapses naked to the ground? I know I do.

3. CD Denjin

Not wholly original, but the goofy expression followed by the face-first smashing into your TV screen almost makes dying worthwhile.

2. Daimakaimura

One of the all-time classic deaths as poor Arthur crumbles into a pile of bones on the floor, accompanied by the perfect jingle. Often copied, never bettered.

1. PC Genjin

Sheer comic greatness: an eye-popping leap backwards followed by a roll on the ground and culminating in an utterly over the top frothing at the mouth, it is simple yet very effective. Then in a classy move, he just lays down quietly, looking like a sleeping, hairless monkey, waiting patiently for you to push the Run button - PC Genjin is a clear winner.

Dracula X ©1993 Konami, Fausetté Amour ©1993 Naxat Soft, AIM, CD Denjin ©1993 Hudson Soft/Red, Daimakaimura ©1990 Capcom/NEC Avenue, PC Genjin ©1989 Hudson Soft/Red

sunteam

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